

HYPNOSIS

Powers, Melvin. *Advanced Self-Hypnosis: A Practical Guide.* First U.K. Edition 1962. Thorsons. Pp. 127. Price 12s. 6d.

ALTHOUGH MANY MISCONCEPTIONS still persist concerning hypnotism there is one great objection which must receive sympathetic consideration. It is the natural reluctance—however mistaken—of one person to place himself under the absolute control of another person. “Auto”-hypnosis at once disposes of this objection and makes many of the undisputed benefits to be derived from hypnotherapy available to all who are willing to train themselves in the subject.

The author of this book is a professional hypnotherapist in America and is to be commended for revealing techniques which a man of lesser calibre might well have kept to himself. The development of imagination and the importance of “visualization” receive proper emphasis and the manner in which “substitution” of a conditioned reflex can be achieved more readily than extinction is on true Pavlovian principles. Despite the word “advanced” in the title of the book the only serious omission for the uninstructed is the field covered by the autonomic nervous system where hypnotherapy is so often dramatically successful.

It would have been a valuable addition if the author had quoted what is perhaps the most convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of autohypnosis—which is to invite the sceptic to imagine that he is holding a lemon and that he is cutting the lemon into slices with a sharp steel knife, and then is placing a slice of the lemon in his mouth and tasting the acidulous juice. The resulting autostimulation of the salivary glands never fails to convince the most sceptical of the enormous possibilities of therapeutic results in organs more deeply situated and less easily appreciated immediately. It would indeed be a bold physician who would set the limits to the efficacy of such treatment to a trained subject.

C. W. USHER

SOCIOLOGY

Patterson, Sheila. *Dark Strangers: A social study of the absorption of a recent West Indian migrant group in Brixton, South London.* London, 1963. Tavistock. Pp. xvi + 470. Price 65s.

THIS RATHER EXPENSIVE book provides good

value in the astonishing wealth of trivial information which it contains. It may be likened to a highly detailed textbook of anatomy. The iteration of innumerable little facts, personal and ephemeral though so many of them are, produces a sense of solidity and a recognition of the extraordinary zeal which must have gone into the compilation. Verbosity is perhaps an unkind word to use where, as here, the intention has clearly been to empty the notebooks of the inquirer so as to build an edifice of fact.

The Times on May 23rd, 1963 commended Mrs. Patterson's work in Brixton in a leading article saying:

She cautiously predicts that over the next decades in Britain the West Indian migrants and their children will follow the steps of the Irish. They will become accepted as a permanent part of the labour force, an able minority will push up into the skilled and professional strata (where a trail has already been blazed) and closer relationships, probably including increased inter-marriage, will lead to at least partial biological absorption. Evidence from other areas tends to support this assessment.

It is only in the last twelve pages of her book that the author moves from fact to consideration of appropriate social action. Her approach is idealistic and properly concerned with the diminution of friction and the building of opportunity. Biological or genetic repercussions of immigration are not within the compass of the book. Nor is there consideration of the numerical dilemma which beset H.M. Government when the flow from Pakistan and India suddenly increased and forced the passing of the novel immigration act. Nor is there consideration of the curiosity or suitability of immigration into a small island already with one of the highest population densities in the world, nor of the possible repercussions if there comes again a period of slump and high unemployment.

However, these absences from the book are not criticisms of it. They are very relevant but the intention of the book is to depict what happens in Brixton now, and that it does well and in detail.

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